

## **Plan of Action Questions and Answers (Administrative Issues)**

- 1) Q: *Can Caltrans do this work for local agencies?*  
A: No, there is a limited amount of work Caltrans can do for a local agency because Caltrans does not have the authority to make the decisions required for local agency POAs.
- 2) Q: *We can't possibly do a scour countermeasure by the deadline. What can we do?*  
A: The deadline is not for the actual countermeasure to be completed, the deadline is for the plan of action (POA).
- 3) Q: *Can local agencies do this work with their own staff?*  
A: Yes, some local agencies may be able to quickly complete the task on their own depending on the number of bridges, complexity, and expertise available. Others may choose to hire a consultant to assist them with their options. Local agencies are the owners, and as such, they are the ones with the authority to make decisions about their bridges even if others are assisting them on a technical level.
- 4) Q: *Is the work to complete POAs federally reimbursable?*  
A: Yes, this is a National Bridge Inspection Standard requirement; therefore the work is eligible for Highway Bridge Program funds. If an agency decides to go forward with a federal aid project, the regular federal aid process will be followed, however, since these are plans of action and not the action itself, the PE phase will be authorized to complete the plan only, not to develop a project for construction.
- 5) Q: *Most agencies have very few scour critical bridges, so they feel it is not worth the effort to administer a federal aid project, what can they do?*  
A: Smaller agencies, or those with few bridges may form agreements with larger agencies such as counties, to either do the work for them, or administer consultant contracts. An agency with a very small number of bridges may also want to complete the POA with its own staff. Caltrans may be able to provide limited assistance to those agencies.
- 6) Q: *What do we do if our POA indicates we will do scour countermeasures or replace our bridge but we haven't already started a project?*  
A: You may use other locally available funds for your project or you may apply for federal bridge funds intended for engineered scour countermeasure projects. Applications and guidelines are available on the Local Assistance website: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/>.
- (7) Q: *Is a Highway Bridge Program (HBP) application required to get federal funds for our Peas?*

- A: No, in place of this you may send a cover letter requesting funds specifically for your POA along with your Request for Authorization to Proceed with federally reimbursable work to your DLAE. Detail of the scope of proposed work should be attached to the letter.
- (8) Q: *My bridge is scour critical but it doesn't show up on the eligible bridge list (EBL). Why is this?*
- A: A bridge *may* be determined to be scour critical based on a calculated value for scour *potential*, however the items causing the bridge to appear on the EBL are evaluated based on the *known* condition at the time of the inspection.
- (9) Q: *Can we get federal HBP funds for a scour countermeasure on a scour critical bridge that is not on the EBL?*
- A: Chapter 6 of the Local Assistance Program Guidelines allows for funding off-EBL scour projects. If you have a scour critical bridge your agency is encouraged to apply for bridge funds.

## **Plan of Action Questions and Answers (Technical)**

- 1) Q: *What if we don't have a recent Bridge Inspection Report (BIR)?*  
A: Caltrans sends these reports to all agencies. These reports should be maintained within the agency. If you do not have a copy, you may contact your District Local Assistance Engineer (DLAE) or your Area Bridge Maintenance Engineer (ABME).
- 2) Q: *Are there any sample Plans of Action we could reference?*  
A: Reference <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/structur/strmaint/smi.htm>
- 3) Q: *What information is required in the Scour Evaluation Summary section of the Plan of Action and what if we don't know this information?*  
A: The *Scour Evaluation Summary* section of the Plan of Action should summarize why the bridge is considered scour critical. For this information, reference the Caltrans scour BIR. The scour BIR should give the details and information regarding the Caltrans hydraulic evaluation. If this is not enough information, contact your ABME or Charles Ineichen of Caltrans, the Office of Specialty Investigation at: [charles\\_ineichen@dot.ca.gov](mailto:charles_ineichen@dot.ca.gov)
- 4) Q: *What if we disagree with the scour rating?*  
A: Explain your disagreement on the Plan of Action Form. Provide your reasoning under the *Scour Evaluation Summary* section and attach any backup information to the form.
- 5) Q: *What information is required in the Scour History section of the Plan of Action and what if we don't know this information?*  
A: The *Scour History* section of the Plan of Action should summarize any past scour history at the bridge site. For this information, reference all past BIR's. Provide any additional scour history that is not indicated on past BIR's. If this is not enough information, contact your ABME or Charles Ineichen at: [charles\\_ineichen@dot.ca.gov](mailto:charles_ineichen@dot.ca.gov)
- 6) Q: *If we have already made structural or channel improvements, when will you return to reevaluate the bridge and change the scour code?*  
A: Contact your ABME and complete the Plan of Action indicating that countermeasures have been installed. The ABME will determine what follow up is necessary.
- 7) Q: *If the bridge is closed to traffic with no prospect of reopening, do we still need a plan of action?*  
A: Yes, fill it out as completely as applicable.

- 8) Q: *Do we need an engineering firm to fill out the Plan of Action Form?*  
A: Not if you have staff qualified and available to do this.
- 9) Q: *Who are qualified engineering firms capable of doing this work?*  
A: The local agency needs to investigate this.
- 10) Q: *Do we need an independent scour review in order to complete the Plan of Action form?*  
A: Not if you have sufficient expertise, information, and resources to do it and agree you with the Caltrans evaluation.
- 12) Q: *What if we have a very old scour review?*  
A: Some of the information may still be useful, but it should be reviewed to determine if it still is applicable to present conditions.
- 13) Q: *Is the Plan of Action being submitted to Caltrans for approval?*  
A: Caltrans will not approve the Plan. However, the plans will be screened for completeness and forwarded to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).
- 14) Q: *Will Caltrans review scour countermeasures for effectiveness?*  
A: Completing the Plan of Action is the present goal. However, in order to change the bridge scour rating, agencies will have to show what standard has been met by the countermeasure.
- 15) Q: *Why do we need a Structural Assessment of the structure?*  
A: The total potential scour may create a stability problem for the structure.
- 16) Q: *How do we get more information regarding the Caltrans structural assessment?*  
A: If Caltrans has done a structural assessment, it would be noted in the scour BIR. If it is noted in the BIR, contact Charles Ineichen at: [charles\\_ineichen@dot.ca.gov](mailto:charles_ineichen@dot.ca.gov) for the additional information.
- 17) Q: *Why do we need a Geotechnical assessment?*  
A: To determine if the foundation capacity of the structure is adequate given the total potential scour and to investigate the channel soil characteristics and possibly determine how susceptible to scour the foundation material is.
- 18) Q: *How do we get more information regarding the Caltrans geotechnical assessment?*  
A: If Caltrans has done a geotechnical assessment, it would be noted in the scour BIR. If it is noted in the BIR, contact Charles Ineichen at: [charles\\_ineichen@dot.ca.gov](mailto:charles_ineichen@dot.ca.gov) for the additional information.

- 19) Q: *What instruments are available for monitoring?*  
A: Reference: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/structur/strmaint/smi.htm>  
Reference the Plan of Action Links in this website.
- 20) Q: *How do we know what discharge makes the bridge vulnerable to scour?*  
A: Consult a qualified engineer to make that assessment.
- 21) Q: *Is monitoring the bridge mandatory?*  
A: No, it is an option.
- 22) Q: *Is monitoring considered permanent scour mitigation?*  
A: That decision is to be made by the local agency. For state owned bridges, Caltrans utilizes monitoring to supplement a more permanent scour mitigation until it can be completed.
- 23) Q: *Does monitoring a bridge mean that a closure plan and a detour route are not required?*  
A: No, the local agency should have a closure plan and a detour route until permanent scour countermeasures that change the 113 code to “not scour critical”.
- 24) Q: *What if we own a bridge we suspect is scour critical, yet is not on the list?*  
A: If a local agency suspects their bridge is scour critical and they have as-built plans and geotechnical information that can be provided for analysis, the agency may contact its ABME to request a scour evaluation. Agencies may also contact Charles Ineichen at: [charles\\_ineichen@dot.ca.gov](mailto:charles_ineichen@dot.ca.gov)
- 25) Q: *If the embankment at the bridge site or the approach roadway fails, is the bridge scour critical?*  
A: Not necessarily. The embankment and/or the approach roadway could fail, however the bridge could still be stable. However, the loss of approach roadway can pose a serious danger to traffic. The county should be prepared to investigate, close the route and detour the traffic when necessary. Furthermore, if there is ongoing embankment erosion or streambed meandering that could threaten the approach roadway during a significant hydraulic event, the county should take efforts to mitigate the problem before serious damage occurs.
- 26) Q: *Is the critical elevation for Structural and Geotechnical Assessments as noted in the Plan of Action section C required?*  
A: No. However, this elevation may be very useful in monitoring the bridge.
- 27) Q: *Will Caltrans recommend a Plan of Action?*

A: No, Caltrans does not have the authority to make these decisions for a local agency.